



B O R O U G H    O F    W O R T H I N G .  
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Report of the Medical Officer of Health for the Year  
1941

-by-

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Medical Officer of Health.

Town Hall,  
WORTHING.  
May 1942.



Public Health Department,  
Town Hall,  
WORTHING.

TO: May 1942.

HIS WORSHIP THE MAYOR, ALDERMEN and COUNCILLORS  
of the BOROUGH of WORTHING.

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Mr. Mayor, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have pleasure in presenting a short report on the health of the Borough for the year 1941.

In my last two war time reports I have comment on the necessity for brevity, but I would point out that all the usual records are being kept for future reference if necessary.

I am glad to be able to say that the health of the town has been good in spite of certain war time restrictions and three successive winters which have been very severe for this part of the country. No outbreak of serious disease has occurred during the year.

During the first quarter the incidence of measles, which began to rise in the last quarter of 1940, continued to ascend and reached a peak in May, on the whole the outbreak was mild, no deaths being recorded.

Concurrently with this outbreak of Measles there was an increase in the number of cases of Whooping Cough, which disease accounted for one death.

The cases of infectious diseases notified during the year are appended.

Scarlet fever .....	25
Erysipelas .....	17
Diphtheria .....	6
Cerebro-spinal-meningitis..	3
Infantile Paralysis .....	1
Measles .....	632
Whooping cough .....	234

### DIPHTHERIA IMMUNISATION.

This work was continued throughout the year.

The response was quite good but might have been better, nevertheless I estimate that by the end of the year slightly over 70% of the susceptible population had been protected.

Figures of the work done under the scheme are appended.

#### YEAR 1941.

<u>Classification.</u>	<u>No. Immunised.</u>
Pre-school age.	565
Between 5 and 16 years.	561
Over 16 years.	1
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Total.	1,127
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It is satisfactory to note that we got a higher proportion of children under school age this year than during 1939 and 1940. Up to the end of 1940 the majority of the children immunised were attending school, and in this connection I am glad to be able to state that not a single case of Diphtheria occurred among the elementary school children during the year.

### SWANDEAN ISOLATION HOSPITAL.

During the year 196 cases were admitted and 171 discharged.

The following are details of the admissions:-

Scarlet fever .....	122
Diphtheria .....	26
Measles.....	13
Whooping cough.....	10
Cerebro-spinal-meningitis.	7
Erysipelas.....	5
Typhoid fever .....	2
Others .....	11
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Total.	196
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Considerable administrative difficulties were experienced throughout the whole year due to shortage of nursing staff. Owing to the low incidence of infectious disease generally it was not necessary to refuse admission to any case of major infection, but on several occasions, minor infections had to be refused in cases where hospital treatment was indicated. The prospect of obtaining nurses does not seem to be any better in the near future than it was during 1941, one can only hope, therefore, that the demand for infectious disease hospital accommodation will not increase.

In collaboration with neighbouring authorities arrangements were made for dealing with cases of Typhus Fever should the necessity arise.

#### VITAL STATISTICS.

The figures for the birth rate are calculated from the number of notified births corrected for transferred notifications, and the death rate from the local deaths corrected for transfers, and is given as a crude death rate as no comparability figure is available at present for correction.

In dealing with this crude death rate it is interesting to note that 59.14% of the deaths occurred in people over 70 years of age and 23.51% in people over 80 years of age.

Live birth rate	)	
per 1000 of	)	
estimated population	) -	10.14
Crude death rate	)	
per 1000 of	)	
estimated population.)	-	18.9

#### DISINFECTION AND DISINFESTATION.

In October 1941 the Scabies Order came into force.

Under this Order the powers of a Local Authority to deal with households affected with scabies and vermin were

extended greatly and so a much needed want has been supplied.

A temporary Cleansing Station has been established and is being used extensively for the treatment of scabies and appears to be much appreciated.

During the year 130 cases of scabies came under treatment. This makes a marked contrast with the figures of 15 to 20 which were usual in pre-war days.

All known cases infected with scabies or infested with vermin are being followed up actively.

During the year 3401 articles, exclusive of Swandean Hospital, were put through the steam sterilizing plant, which included 30 bundles of clothing, each bundle being counted as one article.

Of this total number of articles 834 were in connection with the Scabies Order.

In addition 124 rooms were disinfested for verminous conditions and 93 rooms disinfected in connection with infectious diseases.

It might be mentioned here that a considerable pest of mosquitoes was noticed last year. The Sanitary Inspectors paid 211 visits in connection with this pest and 4,697 treatments of various tanks were carried out.

#### SEWERAGE.

During the year the arrangements for chlorinating the Lancing Sewage before delivery at the sewage works came into operation.

So far these arrangements have proved to be satisfactory.

#### FOOD INSPECTION.

There has been no relaxation whatever in food inspection during the war.

Considering the many war time difficulties the standard of the food supplied has been remarkably good.



Brief details of the work carried out are given in the report of the Chief Sanitary Inspector.

It will be noticed that a considerable amount of unsound meat was found in the slaughter house and some may feel disquieted that so much disease still exists among home bred live stock, but the Members of the Council may rest assured that with our present system of inspection, whereas nothing is wasted, there is no likelihood of any unsound meat getting to the public for human consumption.

Two cases of Undulant Fever were reported in the Borough during the year. This disease is usually spread by milk.

The problem of tackling the infected milk at its source bristles with administrative, technical and clinical difficulties, but efficient Pasteurisation renders infected milk innocuous. Having the advantage of this knowledge it is unfortunate that, under existing regulations, compulsory Pasteurisation is not more easily applicable even when there are very strong reasons for suspecting a supply to be the source of the trouble.

#### INFANT LIFE PROTECTION.

At the end of the year, 26 Foster Mothers had charge of 37 children.

All foster homes are kept under constant observation. On the whole conditions are quite good and the children's health well maintained.

#### MATERNITY AND CHILD WELFARE.

Notified births after correction for transferred notifications:-

(a) Live births - 558. (b) Still births - 20.

Total 578.

Death rate of Infants under one year per 1000 live births - 35.8.

Maternal deaths :-

From sepsis - nil.

From other causes - 1.

Maternal mortality per 1000 total births - 1.8

There is an improvement in the Infantile Mortality rate over last year when it reached a figure of 49 per 1000 live births, but it is still too high for a Borough like this where housing conditions are good comparatively, where natural amenities are high and where there is no industrial pollution or congestion.

I have analysed the figures carefully again this year, the causes of the 20 infant deaths were as follows:-

Prematurity .....	3
Pneumonia and Bronchitis.....	5
Cerebral Haemorrhage.....	3
Debility at Birth and subsequently .....	5
Others .....	4
	—
Total.	20
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Of this total, eight died less than one week after birth among whom were four who did not survive 24 hours. Only one of the infants died from infectious disease, namely, one case of Whooping Cough and Pneumonia.

Of the eight infants who died of prematurity or debility, only three of the mothers had attended our ante-natal clinics.

These cases are important for the health of the mother may play a major part.

The greatest care is taken to watch the nutrition of expectant mothers and to see that their diet is satisfactory. Vitamin extracts are available for all who attend the clinics.

As indicated above there was only one maternal death out of 578 notified births. With this particular patient nothing could have been done beforehand to alter the unfortunate course



which the case took.

The following number of women were admitted to various hospitals during the year under the Council's Maternity Scheme:-

<u>Hospital.</u>	<u>No. admitted.</u>
Worthing Hospital Maternity Home.	51
Southlands Hospital.	20
Sussex Women's and Maternity) Hospital, Brighton. )	5
	—
Total.	76
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Maternity cases are admitted to hospital under the Council's Hospital Scheme where there are medical reasons why hospital treatment is desirable, where housing conditions are unsuitable for confinement in the home, and in cases of obstetric emergency.

When in 1941 the Borough was declared an evacuation area, arrangements were made by the Ministry of Health for expectant mothers to be evacuated for their delivery if they so desired.

Patients are taken to the special maternity homes by car kindly supplied by the Women's Voluntary Service.

From the time the scheme became operative till the end of the year, 50 women made application to participate in it, 27 went finally.

Special brands of dried milk, extra nourishments and vitamin extracts are supplied to young children and to nursing or expectant mothers at cost price. In necessitous cases these nourishments are issued free or at reduced cost.

The total cost to the Council during the year was £157. 6. 4d.

The very considerable drop in the cost of this service over previous years is due to the Governments' Scheme

of Milk Supply to Mothers and Children.

I append a summary of the work done by the Health Visitors during the year in connection with Maternity and Child Welfare.

Total visits to children	-	9,476
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Total visits to mothers	-	1,073
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Attendances at Infant Welfare Centres.

No. of Clinics held	-	123
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Total attendances	-	7,556
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Individual children who attended at :-

Worthing Centre	-	1,084
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Durrington Centre	-	167
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Ante-natal clinics:-

At 28 sessions, 250 women made 458 attendances.

The Health Visitors made also 490 visits in connection with infant life protection and 293 visits in connection with infectious disease, mostly measles and whooping cough.

WATER.

The regular examination of the water showed a high degree of purity consistently.

CIVIL DEFENCE.

As previously reported Civil Defence work occupies a great deal of time and energy. The Casualty Services have responded very well to all calls that have been made on them.

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The Chief Sanitary Inspector has supplied me with the following brief extract from report of work done by his staff.

4391 premises were inspected, including 202 visits to bakehouses and restaurants; 208 to dairies and cowsheds; 77 to ice cream premises; 179 to butchers shops; 563 to other food premises; 342 to factories and 123 to schools.

389 complaints were received and investigated, 310 were verified and appropriate action was taken.

620 inspections were made of Air Raid Shelters, wilful damage and misuse was frequently detected.

732 public health nuisances or contraventions were recorded and 520 were remedied before the end of the year.

#### FOOD AND DRUGS ACT.

34 samples of various foods were analysed under Section 3, for nature, substance or quality, and no serious contravention was recorded.

90 samples of milk were analysed as follows:-

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	Tuberculin Tested.	Pasteurised.	Ordinary.	Unsatisfactory
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For bacterial cleanliness.	10	-	-	4
	-	12	-	4
	-	-	21	7
For tubercle bacilli.	2	-	-	-
	-	4	-	-
	-	-	33	-
Phosphate	-	8	-	1

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Appropriate action was taken in respect of the unsatisfactory samples.

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#### MEAT AND FOOD INSPECTION.

MEAT. 14,474 animals were slaughtered at the local slaughterhouse under the National Slaughtering Scheme. This was a reduction on the previous year but 50% above pre-war.

593 attendances were made at the slaughterhouse and a vast amount of late night etc., work was carried out by the



District Sanitary Inspectors to ensure that every carcass was examined.

The amount of meat found to be diseased was over 23 tons which included 101 entire carcasses, 73 of which were beasts. This meat was salvaged for animal feeding or fat rendering.

OTHER FOODS.

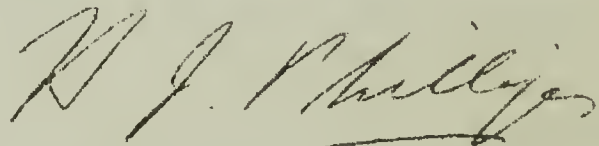
Large amounts of imported fruit and tinned foods were destroyed on account of unsoundness.

A quantity of foodstuffs was also rendered unfit for human consumption by air raid damage.

Civil Defence duties in the Department were again very heavy during the year and demanded an enormous amount of overtime.

I am,

Yours obediently,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'R. J. Phillips'.

Medical Officer of Health.